

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 24-38 are allowable and indicating that claims 40-42 contain allowable subject matter.

Drawings

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate whether the drawings filed on May 29, 2001, in the referenced application are acceptable.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 24-46 are currently pending in this application. Claim 40 has been canceled by this reply without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 24, 31, and 39 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 24, 31, and 39.

Claim Amendments

Independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 40. Accordingly, independent claim 39 is now allowable. Further, claim 41 has been amended to now depend from allowable claim 39.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claims 39 and 43-46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for lack of patentable utility. The Examiner asserts that the aforementioned claims do not produce any useful, tangible result. As described above, independent claim 39 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 40. Thus, independent claim 39 is now

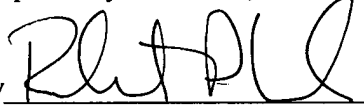
allowable. Dependent claims 43-46, which depend directly or indirectly from amended independent claim 39, are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 13220.016001; P5829).

Dated: March 15, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Robert P. Lord
Registration No.: 46,479
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant

140888_1.DOC